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The American Negro: His Past and Future

Barringer

W. L. Moss.

Athens, Ga.



THE AMERICAN NEGRO

HIS PAST AND FUTURE

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VIRGINIA

(THIRD EDITION)

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Introductory Note.

After the preliminary meeting of the Tri-State Medical Society at Virginia Beach, Dr. P. B. Barringer, of the University of Virginia, was requested by the acting secretary to prepare for the organization meeting of this Society to be held at Charlotte, N. C., a short talk on the *raison d'être* for a new medical society in the South.

In this address Dr. Barringer took the position that if this was to be conducted as other societies, there was no need for a new society, as there were societies in abundance already in existence which devoted themselves to the general needs of the profession, and that if another society was organized it should be based upon new lines. He suggested that the entire first day of each meeting of this new society should be devoted to some subject of broad general interest to the profession, such as the negro problem now facing the South, race mortality, inebriety, etc. This suggestion was well received and the negro problem was chosen as the subject for discussion at the next meeting at Charleston, S. C., and Dr. Barringer appointed leader of debate with the request that he bring in a paper on the influence of heredity upon the negro. Many papers on the negro were read at this Charleston meeting and the subject freely discussed. By the unanimous vote of the Society it was ordered that the papers of Dr. P. B. Barringer and Dr. S. C. Baker should be printed and sent to all the medical societies in the South with the recommendation that they seriously consider the facts therein set forth.

PAULUS A. IRVING,

Secretary Tri-State Medical Society.

The American Negro, His Past and Future.*

Mr. President and Gentlemen of the Tri-State Medical Association:

In the early part of this century, when the cholera appeared in Edinburgh, the good people of that city wrote in alarm to the then Prime Minister, Lord Palmerston, an Edinburgh man, asking that he appoint a day of national fasting and prayer. To this the Premier replied, saying: "The Master of this Universe has appointed certain laws of nature for this planet on which we live, and the weal or woe of mankind depends upon the proper observance of these laws." To the people of the South, alarmed by the rapid increase of the negro and his relatively greater increase in crime, I recommend these words. The weal or woe of this people depends largely upon the promptitude with which they turn their faces from looking after external sources of help and apply themselves to the problem at hand.

Sociological problems are in most cases biological problems and while the whole history of man is relatively short from the standpoint of records, it is infinitely long from the standpoint of biological data, and the one is just as valuable in guiding human reason as the other. There is a short, crisp biological axiom which reads "the ontogeny is the repetition of the phylogeny." This axiom literally translated, means, "the life history is the repetition of the race history;" freely interpreted it means that the life history of any individual, of any type, unless modified by forces of an exceptional character, will tend to conform to the lines of ancestral traits. This, you will observe, is but the expression of the conservative force in nature, as opposed to the modifying influences of environment. In other words, it is a terse expression of the existence of the force we call "heredity" in life.

The lay idea of heredity is, however, a very vague and uncertain quantity. The term is sometimes made use of to even up scores on "Old Adam" when other reasons for the occasional lapses of preachers' sons are not at hand, but very few really appreciate the principles involved. The above axiom covers more than simple heredity, as we shall see. It takes an individual from the fertilized ovum to the grave, and declares that throughout all this period the child shall tread the path his fathers trod; and this tendency to repeat is not only structural, but physiological and psychic as well. As this paper may have some lay readers, I

* Address delivered by Dr. Paul B. Barringer, Chairman of the Faculty of the University of Virginia, in Charleston, S. C., February 20, 1900, before the Tri-State Medical Association of Virginia and the Carolinas.

will briefly illustrate; if we study the embryonic development of any higher organism we will see repeated in the process the various stages of the developmental history of that type. Man himself, in the embryonic stage, taking the heart as an example, presents in order the simple tubular heart of the mollusk, the branchial arches of the amphibian, the analogue of the tripartite heart of the reptile, and last, the four chambered organ of the mammal. So with the other organs.

In equal manner we see in the postembryonic life of any individual the same tendency to repeat ancestral history. The earlier primitive deer was a spotted animal. The European fallow deer is now among the few members of this family retaining the original colors, but, under the law, the young of all this family must sport the ancestral colors, if but for a time, and hence the spotted fawn. Among the giant cats, the leopard is the oldest type, and when change of environment developed in the lion and in the American puma, or panther, solid colors, the young still present the spots of the primitive type. As with the skin, so with the body. In illustration of the same law, I will also now briefly refer to habits. Let us take an animal familiar to all, man's best companion after man himself—the dog. You all know that the well-bred pointer, though raised apart from any bird dog, is expected to stand the first bird it ever scents, and the better classes of this breed will also retrieve the bird when killed. These traits are, however, late acquirements and they are readily lost. It takes the utmost care in selection and breeding to maintain the type. Three or four generations of the same blood, untrained and undisciplined, will give a scrub dog which no trainer would accept. He will break shot, chase and mangle his game and show all the vices. If you will notice this scrub dog, however, you will see in him certain traits which never lapse. These his ancestors had for the thousands upon thousands of years before he knew man. I will mention as one the habit of turning around two or three times before lying down to rest. There are breeds of dogs whose ancestors have certainly been separated from the jungle for thousands of years, but the millions of years of jungle habit will not be overcome in a day, and he will conscientiously “go through the motions” of treading down the grass on the hearth before the fire. I would also invite your attention to another influence of heredity manifested in these animals now under consideration. We have all heard of the cur dog and most of us have seen him. A “yaller dog,” with a dark muzzle, ears at least semi-erect and a drooping tail. He is the product of indiscriminate breeding and it makes no difference how specialized the type from which you start, the product of the indiscriminate breeding of varieties is a reversion to the primitive type in color, in form and in temper, and this, whether it be the wolf, jackal, dhole or dingo type. The crossing of a shepherd dog and a setter will not give a combination dog, but an animal

worthless either for sheep or birds. He throws to the wind his late acquirements which man for a short time has forced upon him, and falls back upon and retains only what is bred in the bone. In his phylogeny the tutelage of man counts as but a day, and, left alone, he is himself again, the wild dog, the "sheep-killing dog," the pariah, the cur whose name is the very essence of opprobrium. These constitute a few of the commonplace illustrations of this law around us.

From what has been said it will be seen that the longer the life history of a race (the phylogeny) has been uniform, undisturbed and unbroken by modifying influences, the more firmly ingrained will be the peculiar traits descending to any offspring of this race, and influencing its life (the ontogeny). It will be further seen from the above that in order that any modifying influence should produce a permanent change in the habits of a race it must be applied for a long time; a time at least long enough to establish in place of the old, a secondary phylogeny, at least commensurate in time with the first, and also that the influence of the change in environment must persist. The latter is absolutely essential; otherwise physiological inertia and momentum would the one offset the other.

Let us apply this biological axiom to the human race, taking as our example of that race, the Southern negro. In advance, I will here state what I hope to show. I will endeavor to show that the American negro is the resultant of a combination of forces, each one of which can be isolated and analyzed. I will show from the study of his racial history (phylogeny) that his late tendency to return to barbarism is as natural as the return of the sow that is washed to her wallowing in the mire. I will show that the ages of degradation under which he was formed and the fifty centuries of historically recorded savagery with which he came to us can not be permanently influenced by one or two centuries of enforced correction if the correcting force be withdrawn. I will further endeavor to show that when the correcting force of discipline was removed he, like the released plummet, began to fall, and, although the mills of the gods grind slowly, what we have already seen is but the first evidence of a motion as certain in its results as the law of gravitation.

Fortunately for us, experience (history) also shows that these savage traits can be held down, and we have seen that if held down long enough, they will be bred out. In this one fact lies the hope of the South.

Let us go back, then, and look at the phylogeny of our brother in black, and see what his first history teaches us. It may be asked ere we begin, what African our American is—of what tribe, from what part of the continent? I will answer that we, at least, know that he came from the west coast of Africa, and from the valleys of the Niger and Senegal, and as everything in this part of Africa is originally of one race and one blood, we will call him the west coast African—the true negro, the very lowest of the blacks.

Erman and other writers on ancient Egypt declare that the negro was known to the early Egyptians as far back as the time of Pepi, of the VI Dynasty. This is put by all Egyptologists as far back as 2500 B. C., and by many a thousand years earlier. It was also indicated that the negro of that date presented the same general characteristics of the negro of equatorial Africa to-day. In the time of Thotmes III, about 1500 B. C., there was carved at Thebes a triumphal tablet which represents a line of negro prisoners, with their wives and children, being registered by a scribe. The woolly-headed, thick-lipped, prognathic savage stands there to-day as if graven yesterday with the Southern plantation negro as the model. We next meet him in Carthage, brought by caravans across the desert from the sources of the Niger, the headwaters of this stream being known to them as the "Nile of the Blacks." We hear of the negro again in Roman times as a bearer of burdens in Rome, and an untrammelled savage in Africa; still the same. The slave-trader found him later, just the same, ready to sell his own flesh and blood and that of his neighbor—when he could not eat it. So Du Chaillu, Livingston, Speke, Grant, Stanley and others have all, and at all times, found him, the original and unmodified savage.

In evidence of what the negro still is in Africa, I will cite here from a report by the Rev. Mr. Shepherd, a negro missionary of the Southern Presbyterian Church, in the Congo Free State. This report is corroborated and endorsed as true by the Rev. Mr. Vass and Rev. Mr. Morrison, of the same Church. Hearing of a slave raid in his vicinity at Luebo, Mr. Shepherd went over to the raided villages and I quote from Mr. Vass's report:*

"The sight was barbarous. He (Shepherd) saw fourteen villages burned and plundered. He saw forty-seven dead lying around the camp, rotting; saw three with the flesh carved carefully off and eaten, according to the testimony of the chief, Melumba N'Cusa. He (Melumba N'Cusa) said eighty or ninety had been killed, the others were eaten by his people. There are 500 of the Zaps at this place. He saw sixty women prisoners huddled together in a pen. Many will likely be eaten; others taken to the State. Sixteen men had already been sent to the State. The road along the way stank from the exposed dead."

This report was made in October, 1899, less than six months ago, and it gives the forbears of our Southern negroes as they are seen at home to-day. I will further add that there is not in history or in monument one scintilla of evidence to prove that the west coast negro was ever better than we find him to-day.

Lord Beaconsfield was wont to boast, as well he might, that his forefathers were kings when the ancestors of the people of England were

* *The Missionary*, January, 1900.

skin-clad savages in the mud-flats of northern Europe, but where is the phylogeny of the Jew when it is thus matched against the forty or fifty centuries of unchanged life, presented by this dusky, primitive type?

A careful study of the foregoing writers will show an individual life in Africa, past or present, to be about as follows: The negro child is born under fair skies and in a land of plenty, but so improvident are his people that although plantains, bananas and "mealies" will grow for the mere planting, his life from his birth onward is marked by alternate periods of gorging and starving. The latter causes him to widen the range of his appetite and young buds, succulent roots, insects, berries or anything that would prolong life, are used. The survivors of many centuries of such a life should certainly be of strong digestion and indiscriminate appetite, and this explains why a negro ration, as it is called South, "a peck of meal, three pounds of bacon and a pint of molasses a week," is "a plenty."

But the influence of periodic starvation is seen in another way. At some early period when not only threatened, but actual, starvation came, the survivors survived, as they have often done elsewhere, through cannibalism. In the next period of dearth cannibalism was easier, and in the next, easier still. With annual periods of famine it is easy to see how the habit grew and how in time it reached a point at which they could not wait for the famine, but began to avail themselves of whatever material disease or war happened to throw in their way. That death by disease afforded no obstacles with the equatorial negro is seen in the case recorded by Stanley when they dug up and ate a corpse, dead with smallpox, which had been buried for quite a time. Such, in short, is my idea of the origin of cannibalism. It is the logical result of a climate and soil bountiful enough to beget improvidence and yet not sufficiently certain to insure against occasional famine. Unable to resist, the aged first suffered, and came in time to be everywhere considered as legitimate material for food. But let us return to our young African. Protected by a racial odor that seems to repel even the mosquito, (the bite of a certain type of mosquito is now known to be the cause of malaria), he is immune to the fevers which make the west coast the white man's grave. As he grows to adolescence he is familiarized with every type of evil and brutality. He sees in the centre of the kraal a young girl lashed to a pole to be devoured alive by buzzards—"a charm to bring rain" (Burton): he sees annually the "customs" when 20, 30 and sometimes even 70 or 80 human beings, male and female, are publicly put to death by club and spear "to propitiate the evil spirits."

When adolescence is complete he joins the fighting men to learn the use of the bow, the club and the spear, and he is then ready to participate in the cannibal forays and in the slave raids. These raids, as we

have seen, consist in swooping down on some unsuspecting village, murdering the men and capturing and outraging the women. The children of both sexes are also taken, sometimes eaten and sometimes kept as slaves. The free sexual life of the kraal and the raid, continued as it has been for ages, has given the negro male, at least, a sexual development, both anatomical and physiological, unapproached except among the lower animals. A feature of west coast life, that to my mind was its most important feature, was the absence of all restraint either parental, social, or governmental. The child, the boy, and the man followed only his impulses, and these were in time naturally cultivated to the basest of passions, with the results dishonesty and robbery, cruelty and murder, lust and rape. Among all men we have many that are dishonest, yet there are few robberies; lust is, among the depraved, as natural as thirst, yet there is but little rapine, and there is, moreover, everywhere inherent cruelty, and yet there is little murder. With the savage, however, there is no self-control, and dishonesty gives theft, anger gives murder, and desire rape. This state of being is pathognomonic of savagery; and the African fills the bill. There seems to be in him an entire absence of sustained will-power—will to resist. Not being able to resist his impulses, he has no fixed purpose, no resolve, and the result, no pertinacity. The outcome of all this moral deformity is a creature which, as far back as history runs, has made the ideal slave, in so far, at least, as resistance is concerned. In old Egypt, Carthage and Rome, one and all, he brought the highest price, the sordid measure of adaptability. There are races that die under captivity. The force that is strong enough to keep them under is too strong for life, and they perish. The early settlers of New England and Virginia had an abundance of quite highly colored people around them; why did not they enslave them? They all at first tried it, but practically they failed; for our Indian was of sterner stuff than the west coast native. With the latter, but supply his bodily wants, including woman, and he is happy under any social conditions, for in his natural state a desire seldom strays above his medulla. This peculiarity, this contentment with slavery, notwithstanding his savagery, made him most acceptable to the thinly-peopled plantations of Massachusetts and Virginia. It was this ingrained trait of nature and this alone which saved the South from a slave uprising during the war of secession. These, in short, are the generic traits of the savage black, which cupidity on the one hand, and folly on the other, led us to bring to our shores.

And now as to the American exotic. The natural condition of any locality influences its fauna as well as its flora. In a state of nature, the mere fact that these forms of life are there, is proof that they are able to meet the conditions of climate, life, warfare, etc., in that locality: they are the product of their environment. There are certain races of

mankind so adjustable that they can live anywhere. The dog has been so long a follower of man that in his hands he has been put in such shape that, in one form or another, he follows man anywhere on the globe. The same is true of man's other parasitic attendants, the rat, the cat, the cockroach, the house-fly, etc. Usually, however, where any animal or vegetable type is moved from its natural environment, and placed in a new, we see a disturbance of nature—a biological revolution. Either the new comer will find telluric and climatic conditions which it is unable to overcome, consequently perishing, as the palm in Iceland or the Esquimo in the tropics, or else it will be found that the natural causes which hold it in check in its own land are wanting in the new, and it grows beyond all bounds and becomes a pest and curse. Among the plants this is known to many of you from your experience with Bermuda grass, Means's grass, etc. Turning to the animal forms, we all know that among the acts of folly for which man has suffered more or less may be mentioned the introduction of the rabbit into Australia, the "English" sparrow into North America, the mongoose into Bermuda, the Gypsy moth into Massachusetts, etc. But of all the follies recorded since the fall of Adam none is to be compared with the introduction of the west coast cannibal into America. The lack of suitability to our political conditions, on the one hand, with the marvelous development of parasitic qualities and an unusual fecundity, on the other, has made it the crowning folly of the world. That we have learned something through experience, is shown in the "Chinese Exclusion" act—although I would hesitate to base this statement on the reasons assigned by the Congressmen who voted for this exclusion.

The American continent received its first negro slaves in 1620, the slave trade ceased finally about 1808 and slavery ended in 1865. The early distribution of these slaves is interesting. There were at the time of the first census, in 1790, only 697,897 slaves in the United States, of whom 17 were in Vermont, 158 in New Hampshire, 2,759 in Connecticut, in New Jersey 11,423, and so on increasing as we go South. With anti-slavery prejudices at that date practically nil, this disparity in negro population North and South must have been due to the fact that equatorial "help" was not profitable in the far North.

The American negro as we find him, to-day is the resultant of a mixture of many tribes in one race. Some were artisans, as the Fans, others farmers, as the Ashanti, and others traders, as the Bakete, but in this they all agreed: all were savages. And yet it must not be forgotten that while the rank and file of the negroes brought to America came from the slave coast, the gold coast, the ivory coast, and some few even as far down the west side as Benguela, a few slaves came from almost all parts of Africa. The result was that the cannibal herd from Bonny, Old Malabar and the Cameroons was at least leavened with a fair

measure of less black, and less degraded (Indo-African) blood from the southwestern coast. From Bonny alone came 320,000 negroes to America. It must also be remembered that quite a large number of female slaves landed in America were either with child or had young at their breasts by the African slave-trader (usually Portuguese, Indo-African and Arab); an entirely different kind of savage. Nor must it be forgotten that at least during the early part of the period of slavery the negroes inter-married with the occasional Indian slaves, or interbred with the then abundant "tame Indians." All these things must be borne in mind in estimating the occasional products of this mixture. The Indian cross gave a negro of sullen temper, but of very decided force (Fred Douglas), one certainly, as I remember, much feared by his fellows on the plantation. I also recall when a boy having heard a slave woman boast that she was a "Dinka nigger," and it was many years afterward that I learned of this fine Indo-African race, living a thousand miles or more inland from the west coast, and seldom enslaved. I will, moreover, state, since I have entered upon reminiscence, that I have seen on the floor of Congress the very image of a dusky Portuguese Don, representing one of the Gulf States of the South. Last came the final and abundant crossing with the white race. The monuments of this form of human frailty are everywhere around us, and fitting monuments they are of frailty. Of less stamina than African black, they show more intelligence, but the inherent physical weakness of hybridization forbids that they should ever wipe out physically the line between the races. My own limited observation shows, and I think the next census will bear me out, that they are markedly on the decrease. Whether this is due to improved morality on the part of the whites, or to a high death rate on the part of the mulattoes, time alone will show.

And now let us turn to the influence of this "peculiar institution" upon the negro. Although he came to us a savage, with fifty generations of unalloyed savagery behind him, two hundred and fifty years of close association, as slave and master, produced changes in the race, the like of which has never been seen before or since.

Whatever the evils of slavery may have been, and I have no desire to minimize them, the general result was at the close of the war some 4,000,000 negroes, who were in their average morality and character so far ahead of any other 4,000,000, or any other 1,000,000 of that race to be found elsewhere on the face of the earth that they were not in the same class. I seriously doubt if from the millions of negroes of Cape Colony, the Soudan, Zanzibar and Egypt, one hundred thousand of this race could have been secured which would compare in general morality and character with the average product of American slavery. And it must be here again emphasized that the negroes selected for

comparison above are of the higher Indo-African race, while our raw material was almost entirely the west coast cannibal. No, my friends, we can boldly declare the old Southern house servant, male or female, as brought up in the better class of families, was the flood tide product in negro character. It seems strange that a woman of Mrs. Stowe's intelligence, should not have seen the paradoxical side of a work written in criticism of a civilization which produced an "Uncle Tom" and a "Topsy" from savage cannibals in less than five generations.

But let us turn a moment and see how this was done. It was most quickly done and it reached its highest state of perfection where the negro was thrown, and kept, in daily and hourly contact with the whites, as among the body and house servants. Here the negro was, as it were, a part of the family; he was around the whites all the time. Even on the Sabbath he went to a part of the same church, set apart for him. As above stated, the qualities which made this same savage appreciated and valued above all other slaves in ancient Egypt, Carthage and Rome, were to be found in the Southern slaves, namely: the willing and cheerful surrender of his will to a stronger and more forceful character. This racial hypnotism, as it might be well called, long continued, gave as a resultant in the South an "Uncle Remus" and "Marse Chan's" Sam. In the North wherever the negroes are few and where they are brought into close relationship with the whites, something like it is seen even now; and the resulting negro is of an advanced type, but utterly unlike his Southern brother. The struggle for existence there develops even in the negro a seriousness in his views of life utterly at variance with the natural negro character.

The great bulk of the negroes of our Southern slavery times were not, however, house servants. They were the field hands or "quarters" negroes. Here a seemingly loose but effective discipline was maintained. It is astonishing when we look back upon it how little it was and yet how effective. The things in which the training of all slaves agreed were in the three essentials: to respect, to obey and to work. These three things, so essential to the formation of character in every man, be he bond or free, were forced upon the negro, with the result that he developed marvelously. It must be understood that here we speak again of the average. The later importations had but one or two generations of tutelage at best; and on the large plantation, in the low swamp lands, and on the isolated sea islands, hundreds of negroes were under the care of one or two white men, usually of low type, and their moral training was nominal. There was, however, the same perfect obedience and much work but no respect, for overseer and slave were usually of too near the same grade for respect. But just here I wish to emphasize one fact which stands out with wonderful brightness from the picture otherwise sombre; the absence of serious crime. Rape was

absolutely unknown, murder was of exceeding rarity and beyond the petty pilfering, which is almost a racial attribute, thievery and robbery were the same.

The negro as a freedman we all know. Rich or poor, he is ever with us. He is the sociological unit of the black cloud now hanging over the South and threatening its very existence. The great diversity of opinion existing among the people of America regarding this problem is, in my judgment, due to the fact that each judges from the small number of these sociological units with which he is personally familiar. These are necessarily of every degree of diversity and hence present every shade of result. Let us, however, first compare the negroes North and South. In the North, outside of the large cities, the negroes are few, they are not herded together and are not subjected to the lowering influence of their own racial association. Here, under Caucasian tutelage, they are still rising. It is hard for the Northern man, seeing this clean and respectable man of color, to form any idea of the nienty and nine without this moral support.

If further illustration is needed of white influence on the negro, take the negro "regular" of the United States army. Here, under the long-continued tutelage of white officers you see the negro moulded with the greatest ease into a compact organization. On the other side, there is no burlesque upon organization so utterly complete as a negro regiment with negro officers. The uncontrolled savagery of the few volunteer regiments enlisted during the Spanish-American war did much to discredit the superb performance of the negro regulars at Sibony and Santiago, while it opened the eyes of those Northern regiments encamped near them as to what a negro can really be when he's "all nigger." In the large cities of the North, especially east of the Mississippi, they tend to congregate, and although outnumbered thousands to one they improve but little.

If our eight million negroes could be distributed evenly throughout the seventy million whites on this continent there might be no negro problem. The cloud would be dissipated; but, alas! this race is not one of "particularistic" trend, it is phylogenetically gregarious, and tends to herd, hence the cloud. But even under the favorable conditions for elevation at the North, even under the stimulus of a public trial of his race before the world and under the very eyes of his liberators, he breaks down and his phylogeny asserts itself; with the result that there is not a State in the Union, North or South, East or West, where the records have been published, in which the negro population does not show proportionately a greater percentage of criminals than the whites.*

And yet as criminal as they are, it is strange with such antecedents

* Willcox "Negro Criminality."

that they are not worse. The negroes who have risen above their generic tendencies, and they are not few, are worthy of our very highest admiration and respect. This I freely and gladly accord, but he is the enemy of the negro who for a moment fosters in him the belief that the essentials of civilization are yet his or that his race is now ready to go forward without the sustaining influence of the whites. All human experience is against it: he is not yet even "galvanized."

It is said that if you scratch a Russian you will find a Tartar. By the same law, if you scratch a negro you will find a savage. A curious evidence of this fact is seen in the negro in his family discipline. He is not over free to use the rod, and seems to approach his duties in this line with some reluctance, but simply watch him when once started. At the first blow, and reflex cry of agony, the savage is aroused. With each blow his frenzy is increased, and he can hardly stop, with the result that the brutal beating of their children is not a small factor in the present fearful child mortality of that race. But let us leave the North and come South and look at the negro on the ground where this problem is to be fought out. Here one is at first naturally tempted to divide the territory, as is usually done in considering the negro problem, into the "South at large" in which the negro is simply everywhere abundant, and into the "black belt" section in which he far outnumbers the whites. The fact that most men of experience in estimating the future of the negro base their predictions of improvement or decline chiefly upon the ratio existing between the races, makes me hesitate to declare that this is not the chief element involved in this question and yet I do not believe that it is. I believe it to be a matter not of ratio, nor of localities, but simply a matter of generations. The increase in crime among the negroes that so alarms the South is not limited to any one region, but the increment of gain seems just as pronounced in the South at large as in the black belt, while the ratios of population vary immensely. My own observation and all the statistics that I am able to obtain go to prove that the last generation of negroes born to slavery was, and is now, far more free from criminal habits than the one born since the war. Every day of slavery seems to have counted for their benefit, as we will see if we compare the records of this generation with that of those whose boast it is that they were born free. It is not the older negro, but the negro under thirty, which crowds our jails and penitentiaries throughout the land. As we have seen, the negro even in the North is distinctly more criminal than the white, but the negro in the South leads the white in crime by from one hundred to several hundred per cent., depending upon the form considered. If anyone doubts the facts here set forth simply let him, upon his return from this meeting, examine the police justice's or mayor's office records of his own town, and I am ready to stand or fall upon the result. In this examination

it must not be forgotten that the crime of unlawful cohabitation among negroes is, as a rule, ignored by the officers of the law, because its suppression is an end impossible of attainment. But he is blind to the worst aspect of this negro problem and shuts his eyes to the most disheartening feature of the race question who does not recognize and confess the fact that, bad as this comparison is for the negro, it would be far worse if the white race in the South had not been made more criminal than it otherwise would have been by prolonged contact with this degraded race. There is no use in longer mincing matters. This problem is to save the white man of the South from barbarism by reclaiming the savage to whom he is inseparably tied. It rises above a question of altruism and becomes a question of self-preservation. With this view of it, then, let us study the conditions at present existing in the South.

In the Middle Atlantic States and in the piedmont and mountain sections of the South Atlantic and Gulf States, the negro is not at his worst. Mixed in with the whites in small proportion he is in some measure improving with the general improvement of the country. He is the day laborer, the stableman, the wagoner, and, to an increasing extent, the carpenter, bricklayer and blacksmith of the country. In the latter art he is particularly strong, and not without reason, for the Fans and other west coast tribes, although the worst of cannibals, have been from time immemorial excellent workers in iron. In all other races when the "iron age" was reached, some social prosperity and progress began, but the west coast negro it failed to raise. Throughout this entire section above referred to the older negroes are usually good, honest and reliable laborers, worthy representatives of their class, and in their humble sphere, good citizens. They were born to slavery or else were born so early after that institution ceased, that its momentum carried them on, and their working parents taught them to work. Some few have made money, others have received their homes, and others small property, from their former masters. It is the young negro class which gives us cause for alarm. The term "worthless" is so universally applied to this class that I think it must be the proper one. They are absolutely worthless and no industry can be successfully maintained which is entirely dependent upon their labors.

But now let us turn to the true "black belt." Beginning in southside Virginia, through the tide-water section of the Carolinas and Georgia, around the coast and up the Mississippi to Memphis, we have a climate and soil as congenial to the black as the valley of the Senegal or that of the Niger. Parts of this section, and those its most fertile, the rice plantations, the river bottoms and the sea islands had, as before stated, a population of a hundred negroes to one overseer. The highly aromatic black of the Guinea coast was best adapted to these intensely malarial sections with the result that he was weeded out in the uplands and sent

there by the thousands. The original African formed in some places such a large part of the population that those words of the west coast dialects, which were common to a number of tribes, became, with perverted English and French verbs, the current jargon of the coast negro. The French element must have come in with the Haytian negro, brought here early in this century. This *dialect de diable* is as some of you know spoken to-day within thirty miles of this city, and is as absolutely unintelligible to the average member of this body as Chinese or Arabian. In this black belt it will be readily seen that the negro was elevated but little by slavery; he was simply a savage under coercion. And yet the white man had taught him to obey and to work, and that for a west coast negro was a long step towards civilization. At all events, in this black belt section, it is again the older negroes, the ex-slaves or the sons of slaves born soon after the war, who are the only ones on whom it is possible to rely for labor.

Thirty-five years have passed since the negro changed from the condition of a slave to that of a freedman. In every part of the South, it is the opinion of every man of unbiased mind, that the second generation is infinitely worse than the first. So patent is this that I would be tempted to doubt the sanity of any man having fair opportunities to judge, who declared the reverse to be true. The question for us to-day then, and the question of questions for the South, is, "What is the cause of the change and what can be done to remedy the evil?" The first thing is to seek out the truth, however unpalatable it may be, and in my opinion it is very simple. The young negro of the South, except where descended from parents of exceptional character and worth, is reverting through hereditary forces to savagery. Fifty centuries of savagery in the blood can not be held down by two centuries of forced good behavior if the controlling influences which held down his savagery are withdrawn as they have been in this case. The language and forms of civilization may be maintained, but the savage nature remains. It is the nature that makes the criminal and imperils a civilization, not the language, the skin or the clothes.

That this return to savagery may possibly occur with the negro we have evidence in the experience of Hayti. The island of Hayti is about the size of Scotland, and infinitely more fertile. Into this, the first known island of the Western world, the negro was introduced as a slave in 1505. Here the whites and the negro dwelt in the relation of master and slave until the French revolution of 1798 brought on a secondary colonial revolution in Hayti, and about 1805, after just three centuries of association, the whites were driven out or destroyed and the negro was free to work out his own salvation.

Let us glance a moment at his social equipment for this task. When the revolutionary cry of "*Liberte, egalite et fraternite*" was raised in

Hayti, it found 450,000 souls, of which 40,000 were white, about 30,000 free mulattoes and the remainder west coast blacks, slaves. Lossing, in his "Horrors of San Domingo," (Harper, June, 1871), says: "Many of the mulattoes owned large estates. Not a few had been liberally educated in France, and many households were models of elegance and refinement wherein happily dwelt young Frenchmen with beautiful quadroon wives." Of one of the leaders of the revolution he says that he "in France had associated on terms of equality with Lafayette and his revolutionary compeers," etc. This tells us at least enough to demonstrate that the slave hordes were at least once tinctured with men of education and force, and that they started on their career of freedom with some intelligent and able leaders. It is a long, dismal story from Soulouque to Hippolyte, but the outcome of it all is graphically set forth on the authority of Sir Spencer St. John (*The Black Republic*, 1899), as follows: "Official peculation, judicial murder and utter corruption of every kind, underlie the forms and titles of civilized government; the religion, nominally Christian, is largely Voudoux, or serpent-worship, in which actual and horrible cannibalism is even now a most important element. Instead of progressing, the negro Republican has gone back to the lowest type of African barbarism." The same state of affairs is rapidly approaching in Gaudaloupe and Martinique.

We have here one fact that will offset a ton of theory: in the Western world, under conditions differing in no marked essential from those presented in our own black belt, the negro has gone back to savagery, and that too while still presenting all the outward forms of civilization.

Let us look at our own negroes for the prodromal symptoms of this decline. In the first place, let us take up and consider the family, the unit of social measurement and gauge of social progress. This family, in the warmer parts of the South at least, lives by preference in a hovel. Provide good, healthful and substantial houses, or clean, neat and attractive rooms, and try to substitute these in lieu of a part of the monthly or weekly wage, and see how you will stand in the matter of servants. They will not have them at this price. Money represents to the negro the power of gratification for animal appetite. Comfort, health, self-respect and gentility are as a rule nothing compared with the gratification of vanity, lust, the cravings for drink, tobacco, the gaming habit, etc. To obtain the money which represents these things they are almost all willing to herd like animals in the foulest of dens and amidst the filthiest of surroundings. This is the environment that we must start with to approach the next element of family life—children. Begotten of the very loosest sexual relations, there is of necessity little love of offspring, and abortion, infanticide, and child murder are common. This, with the pitiful parental neglect of infancy, with its resulting high infant mortality, alone prevents the race, with its

wonderful fecundity in this congenial clime, from overstocking the South in a few decades. As the ordinary negro child grows it is in such fatal surroundings, of course without discipline, and it can hope to be no better than the source of its moral and religious training. Here the child simply grows as the twig is bent, and as the direction is naturally in line with the standard of preceding generations it is downward, as far as morality is concerned. As far as externals go he seems better than he is. The rapidity with which this young negro acquires through "sound memory" is, for his opportunities, good, and makes up for his racial deficiency in "symbol memory" training. Judged by what we call "brightness" in children, the negro child can take very fair rank among his fellows of the human family, and some of them are bright, a quality not a little accented by their racial cheeriness and lightness of heart. And yet you all, as medical men, know of that sadness of heart with which you have watched the development of physical beauty or high mental attributes in the members of some families doomed by hereditary tendencies to premature death. With the same feeling, experience has taught us to look upon the relatively precocious intelligence of negro childhood, for we know that with the advent of puberty and sexual development there will be an almost total arrest of subsequent mental growth. His people have "gone to seed" at this time of life too long for him to depart from the family traditions. It has been noted from the earliest time in northern Africa and western Asia, where the necessities of harem life require the eunuch, that the negro eunuch was a vast improvement in shrewdness and general intelligence on the unaltered black, but the reason for it did not at once appear.

But let us return once more to the consideration of this discarded "ward of the nation" which has in fact become the foundling of the State. The public school which he attends is poor enough, and its opportunities for advancement are meager, but it has been freely given by the whites to the serious detriment of their own poor, in the hope that it would solve the problem. In this school he is taught by young men or women of his own color, race and caste. They are to him the exponents of all that he knows of culture, wisdom and educational refinement. Their sentiments on any question are of necessity his sentiments and their prejudices, dislikes and hatreds mould his. As a rule these teachers have but the merest elements of a liberal education, but they know enough to know that their people stepped direct from slavery into absolute political control of the government of nearly a dozen States of the South. They know furthermore that in spite of amendments to the constitution the Southern white has forced them steadily from this position to a point at which, being human, they naturally love him and teach all their pupils to love him and his tribe. The logic of the above statement is far more capable of being under-

stood than the continued existence of such a school. In short the only things gotten from the present system of negro schools that stick to the pupil throughout life are an intense hatred for the white race and false ideals of life. If this hatred stood alone it would be bad enough, but, unfortunately, it does not stand alone. It is known to every observing man that the present generation of younger whites have little of that love and affection for the negro which marked the older generations, especially the slaveholders. Regret this fact we may, but deny it we can not. The result we can only imagine.

But having graduated with him at school let us return and observe this young negro's relations with his family. Filial love is not, of course, as strong as parental love, at the same time love and respect for the old age of parents is as fair a gauge of the standard of civilization with any people as it is possible to obtain. Measured by this standard, the young negro of the South also fails. You will all bear me out that there is nothing more common in the South than to see some aged negro, the parent, perhaps, of a dozen children, left absolutely helpless and without support in his old age by the desertion of his children, and this evidence of a return to African habits seems to be on the increase. When our "boy" which we have followed gets some sixteen or eighteen years of age, unless his parents have been of the better class and have really trained him, his phylogeny begins to trouble him and he dreams and yearns for some analogue of his old African slave raid and the yellow "literature" he can now read urges him on. A young savage by instinct, he naturally takes as his ideal the swaggering bully of his own color. He gradually, by theft and effort, gets up an equipment—no longer the bow, club and spear of his forefathers—but now a cheap pistol, a pair of "knucks" and a razor. He goes to his first "festival" and the "progress of the rake" is henceforth fast. Some night at a carousal he uses his ever handy weapons and flees, carrying with him everything of his parents' that he can steal. He makes for some neighboring city where day labor is in demand, and in top boots and flannel shirt becomes a "hand" for a few days or weeks under some contractor. Working or pretending to work by day, he carouses, drinks and gambles by night, till for some infraction of the law he is off again. By the time he is even fully grown, he is far from home and has almost forgotten the parents that gave him birth: he is a liar, a thief and a rake; a gambler and perhaps a murderer or highwayman; he fears neither God nor man, and when opportunity offers is ready for any crime. He is in his own vernacular "a bad man," and for once he does not lie.

This picture is not overdrawn, nor is it the case of an isolated example. It simply gives the mode of formation and generic characteristics of a specific criminal class, which to-day numbers its tens of thousands in the South. The ending of such a life can be imagined; the victim of

an enraged mob of white men goaded to madness, death on the gallows or a prisoner in jail or penitentiary where tuberculosis and syphilis vie with each other to be "first in at the finish," which is the potter's field, and all, even down to the last, at the white man's expense. During his whole life he has not produced for the State a thousand dollars, and he has cost it four-fold that sum.

And now to the remedy. Before another generation of negroes is allowed to arise, worse, as we must see than the present, the people of the South must act. First they must remove the negro from politics—not, perhaps, forever—but certainly until the proper time. When such distant and alien advisers as the *Philadelphia Inquirer* can see what the following statement indicates, it is blindness that prevents the man on the ground from seeing. That journal, in a recent editorial (February 6, 1900), says: "We have made many mistakes during the course of the century in the United States. What is called 'the Southern question' revolves almost exclusively around the ballot box. The freedom of the ballot box is altogether too free." To deprive the ignorant negro of the political liberty, which he now uses for license, will, by the immediate change it will bring in his relation to the white man, soon indemnify him for the seeming loss. It will, let us hope, soon bring again the old relations in feeling that existed between the races at the close of the war. If the change is long delayed, however, it will come too late; the young whites of the South, more familiar with the "new issue" than the old, have as we have seen but little of that sympathetic feeling for the race that their fathers had. The negro is to them a political menace only; they have no cause to love him and in spite of their traditions they are beginning to hate him. It were better for both races that this should be changed at the first possible moment.

Secondly. The negro must be educated along a new line. There seems to be abroad the idea that this determination to change the method is prompted by a desire to decrease the negro's education. Nothing could be further from the truth, as these figures will show.

At the close of that period of destruction, which in satire only can be called the period of "reconstruction," each State of the South with an empty treasury, faced an average debt of \$34,000,000, as against an average debt of \$7,000,000 existing at the close of the war. Helpless to avert it, the white people of the South had seen the negro put this increased burden upon them, and yet history shows not even an attempt at retaliation. They soon also faced the heaviest war indemnity, in the shape of a pension roll, that was ever placed upon a conquered people, and yet, in the vain hope that education would lift the negro to the measure of his new functions, they paid out for him millions upon millions of dollars. While the negro paid into the school fund only one-

thirtieth of the whole, they expended in his uplifting, nearly one-half that they could raise. Does this look as if there existed in the South any objection to the education of the negro? They could have stopped at any time, and yet hoping against hope, they stuck to their efforts through good and bad for nearly a quarter of a century, and they see as a result, nothing—or worse, for ignorance, pauperism and crime are worse than at the close of the war. The South is therefore going to change its method of negro education. Already the voice of warning is sounded by the Superintendent of Education in one of the Southern States,* and the cry of dissatisfaction is heard on every hand.

I believe they erred in this wise: The people of the South are instinctively an intensely political people. Looking naturally along lines political the white man of the South tried to educate the negro, already cursed with the ballot, to use it more intelligently. They gauged the needs of the negro by the experience of white races, and, as a result, they have failed, and they will continue to fail so long as they attempt to estimate the needs of the negro race by the experience of the white. The phylogenies of the two races are so divergent that the results of experience with one are not safely applicable to the problems of the other.

But we all know that we had a good negro in this country once, and that was in slave times. This was the salient feature of slavery—an inferior race about as moral as the higher. But the masters knew the slave in those days. Generations of experience with him in all types had long since shown him that a little steady force applied in childhood would guide him aright, and that the adult would be a respectful and respectable, obedient and faithful servant. But he knew him well enough to know that underneath this thin veneer of decent life and manners was the nature of a savage, which had to be shaped aright while the cells were still soft in youth, or it were useless to try. The training of the child was the all. Let us consider the training of negro children in slave time and now—what is the difference? In the amount of effort, in the amount of time and in the amount of money devoted to the training of childhood the negro child of to-day has infinitely more than any slave child ever dreamed of, and yet this expenditure is developing criminals, where seeming indifference developed morality. Where is the key to this enigma? It lies in one fact, which utilized, will solve all our troubles in the South, for we have done everything, “except the one thing needful.” The training of the negro is now in the hands of the negro, and before it was in the hands of the whites. Put the training of this foundling of the State into the hands of those who hope ultimately to get back the pay for his keep, and self-interest will see to it

* Report of Superintendent of Education of Virginia. 1899.

that he becomes able to pay. We took the cannibal and made a man of him, and we did it because our grandfathers and grandmothers were not ashamed to give themselves to his guidance. There are in the South to-day the same people, and in this day of national peril, for it is national, as hard as it will be at first, they will not be found wanting. In the old days it was the ambition of the young negroes to become the best woodcutters and the best cradlers, etc., on the plantation. This ambition was attainable; they rose to its demands, and were content and happy. With a race history, if we exclude their slave days, which is in an unbroken line of savagery from beyond the dawn of history to the present, and with poverty now as their portion, we are attempting to make of them "ladies" and "gentlemen."

These ambitions are absolutely unattainable under present conditions, and the result is a disappointed, soured and vindictive generation. The present school system of the South is but a "forcing-bed" for racial hatred and antagonism. I do not harbor any antipathy to the negro school teacher—I simply deny his capacity for the task in question.

The task is to make of the next generation of negroes in the South honest, law-abiding laborers and artisans, with an ambition for the respect of the better class of their own people and of the whites. It is, moreover, our task to do away forever with the idea in the present generation of the negro that a ludicrous pinchbeck imitation of the not altogether perfect manners of the whites is all that is necessary to be admired and respected. In other words, our task is to substitute new, higher, and, most important of all, attainable ideals.

How this can best be done I am not fully prepared to say, but if we will remember that the discipline of the whites in the army, applied to the adult negro, gave the much-boasted negro "regular," and that the discipline of the whites gave the respectable negroes of to-day and all days behind us—we can not go wrong as to the principle. In working out this problem we need not look for external sources of help. It is to be fought out here in the South and by the people of this section alone. The colonization or emigration of the negro is impossible, unless forced, for the parasite, however much he may hate, never leaves his host. You may hear the periodic cry of Southern hatred and Southern outrage, but the door has been open for thirty years, and he is still here, and here he will remain. He may go to the North temporarily for high wages, but in spite of "outrage" he always returns.

There is another emigration, however, which unfortunately may solve the problem for us. I refer to the emigration of the whites from the South. Being a people of great fecundity, there has always been an overflow of population from the South. Before the war, this was chiefly the poorer non-slave-holding—"po" white trash" class; but now there is a reversal of this in kind. Since the war there has been a slow, but

steady emigration from the South to the North and West, and now it is the son of the slave owner, the college man, that is going. In his adopted home he is giving the people a taste of a competition they had not looked for, but he is of little service to the South. Why did these people go from the South? In earlier days the white laborers went to escape the competition of slave labor; in late days they leave to escape the impending savagery of the black; with the lowering of all classes which it implies. Born and reared in the heart of the South, I can now, from the vantage ground of a border State, overlook the whole field, and I tell you now, that unless a brake is placed upon the natural ontogeny of this savage, the South will be uninhabitable for the white. The result will be that the better class will leave and the lower classes, made savage by the growing savagery of their surroundings, will alone be left.

One of two things then may be expected, unless a remedy be found. Some race question will arise which will stir the passions and there will come a struggle, a day of judgment, for folly piled upon folly. As even the lower classes of the South are of pure Saxon blood, the chronicles of their Saxon ancestors will be humane reading compared with the records of that day, but if it comes before the complete degradation of the whites of the South, it will put an end to the negro problem, because it will be the end of the negro.

Less likely, but more to be deplored, will be the other. The majority of the whites will leave, and then, as some narcotic which lulls to insensibility the vital centres, ere it destroys them, so I am afraid the negro will exterminate the last remaining whites of the black belt, first by political mastery, then degeneration and apathy and then miscegenation. But if miscegenation does ever come, it will be the first time in the history of man that a Teutonic stock has so fallen. The Latin races naturally mingle their blood with any race they touch, but the Teutonic roots never.

The South African Boer stands unpolluted after nearly three centuries of contact, but savagery around him has not added to his refinement or worked otherwise for his well being.

It may be said that although Hayti and San Domingo are gone, and Martinique may be expected to follow, these are small insular areas where the return to savagery must be total or none, and these things can never happen in this land of the free and home of the brave. In this you are mistaken, for there are now points, as yet mere points, on the Carolina coast, on the Gulf coast, and in the "Delta," where things are almost as bad as in Hayti, and around these points the whites are leaving; and this is the great danger; the danger for the negro; the whites will leave as increasing savagery comes.

In these sections, now small, but growing, the political debauchery

and financial imbecility which we saw in "reconstruction" times is coming (see eastern North Carolina) and as no State will be found which will long harbor within its borders a "shoe-string district" which is such a blot upon its escutcheon and a tax upon its resources, there will be a division, an extrusion. On the floor of the Senate the representative of these Liberian abortions will, under the constitution, nullify the votes of the best of the States of this Union and then—what!

In conclusion: I have endeavored to show that everything points to the fact that the phylogeny of the negro is carrying him back to barbarism, to show that the temporary elevation produced by the discipline of slavery is not being maintained by the efforts we have made at common school education, in the hands of his own race, and that we must at once, if we would save the negro and the South, try something else. I would finally urge that we try henceforth an education of trade or industrial type, given at the hands of well-chosen white teachers, who will teach him to respect, to obey and to work. Under this, if experience be not fallacious—he will improve in morality, in character, and in capacity as a taxpayer. Then and not till then, will the franchise become for him a reality and the "Jim Crow car" a memory.

